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The entire assembly saluted the district chief, and the official declared the reason for his visit. Then the district chief sent a page for a chief's bonnet, which he gave to a samande. This youth took the bonnet, came up to the kneeling candidates, and jokingly attempted to place it on the head of each one in turn while asking, "Whom did the *keema* ["dead person"; in this case, the dead chief] say should be chief?" When no one answered he gave up the game, ran to the successful candidate, and placed the bonnet on his head. As soon as this happened, all the unsuccessful candidates and men of the lineage ran away, followed by other samande-kamba, who waved big clubs and feigned violence if they should catch them. The men of the lineage soon returned while the new chief did homage and pledged allegiance to the Kombere Naba by prostrating himself on the ground and by putting sand from the tomboko on his head. By this act the Tenga Naba became the district chief's subordinate and the lowest elected official in a ruling hierarchy that extended from the Mogho Naba down to the least village chief.

Once the oath-taking ceremony was over, the new chief's followers saluted the district chief, lifted their new leader onto their shoulders, and bore him triumphantly back to his village, shouting for joy. Here, in imitation of his superiors, the new chief made a speech in which he ridiculed his competitors, reviewed his background, and made known his chiefly intentions. Here, too, the people seized upon some significant point in his speech as an indication of the name "he had named." However, this name was seldom used, since people referred to him as the Naba of such-and-such village, e.g., Barkago Naba, and addressed him simply as "Naba." The village Tengsoba then performed propitiatory sacrifices to the Ninisi ancestors and to the local earth deity in the chief's name, and "gave him back the village" of which he had been the temporary caretaker. Only after these rites had been performed could the chief assume command of the village without incurring supernatural sanctions of the ancient Ninisi.

The typical village chief had no court. His compound was only slightly larger than that of a village family. He had no officials, but some of his companions who assumed special duties similar to those of the Ouidi Naba and the Tansoba were sometimes jokingly referred to by these honorific titles. The village chief had neither soghondamba nor samande-kamba, and he permitted his wives to serve refreshments to his visitors. In general, everything was on a smaller scale than on the district level, including all ceremonies even to the burial of the village chief.

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according to the Mossi, the imminent death of an important chief; secondly, a meteor had passed unexpectedly over Ouagadougou between 8 and 9 P.M. [on March 12th], vividly impressing the Mogho Naba himself.

It is quite possible that the emotions induced by these phenomena aggravated the heart condition that felled him. Certain people have maintained that the Mogho Naba, being opposed to all foreign domination and convinced that serious developments were imminent, voluntarily commited suicide by poison in order to elude them. So far, there is no proof that such a rumor has really been adrift. The matter is under strict investigation.[80]

The Mossi people practiced as best they could the traditional rituals connected with the death of a Mogho Naba. During the interregnum, however, the administration did not permit the usual chaos, ritual or otherwise. One administration report states: "Young people tried to steal things in the market, taking advantage of the old customs, but they were checked."[81] A later report adds that the traditions of the Napoko and the Kourita were honored, and that one hundred persons were arrested for the ritual larceny of small objects.

The traditional Mossi authorities allegedly requested that the deceased Mogho Naba, as one who had worn the Legion of Honor, be given full military honors. This required the placing of his body in a coffin so that the funeral cortege could move through the streets, a fact which introduced a new ritual element in royal funerals. Once this ceremony was over, however, the representatives of the administration withdrew, and the body was buried according to customary rites.

The traditional electoral college then proceeded with the task of choosing a new ruler. The choice was between Issoufou Congo, Kom's eldest son, who was then a lieutenant in the French Colonial Army in the Ivory Coast, and his younger brother, Etienne Congo, chief of the Doulougou district. With the administration's permission, the college elected Issoufou Congo. He took the title "Sagha" (the second Mogho Naba to bear that name), and was installed with traditional ceremonies.

The message Sagha sent to the French High Commissioner bears quoting. Like the traditional speeches of newly elected Mogho Nanamse, it was believed by the Mossi people to contain subtle jibes at enemies, praises to benefactors and friends, and portents of future plans. The Mogho Naba said:

> At the moment when I take command of the Mossi people, I must thank you for having placed me on the throne of my father. I give you assurance of my fidelity toward France in all circumstances. Be assured by this testimony that my father will remain for me an honored person and a guide. I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I re-

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main attached to the French cause. My father is dead, but the soul of Mossi country lives on. I beg you to transmit to Marshal Pétain, Admiral Platon, Governor-General Boisson, and Governor Deschamps the expression of my profound attachment to France and the assurance of my full devotion."[53]

Some contemporary Mossi claim to see the Mogho Naba's appreciation of General de Gaulle, his rejection of the Pétain regime, and his desire to regain power over the Mossi people, in the words, "I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I remain attached to the French cause. My father is dead, but the soul of Mossi country lives on." No one could be sure that this was indeed the Mogho Naba's true sentiment, but this too is according to custom.

Nine months after Issoufou became Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the situation in French West Africa changed radically. The Allied forces invaded North Africa, and, after more than two years of resistance, Governor-General Boisson shifted West African support to the Free French. Forced labor and product requisitions continued, but now the Mogho Naba and his chiefs were told that the aim was to help General de Gaulle. M. Cournarie, who had replaced Boisson as Governor-General in 1943, made no significant changes either in the administration of Mossi country or in its traditional political organization. Nevertheless, the pressures for fundamental changes in European colonial territories were steadily building up throughout the colonial world. De Gaulle, with the foresight he was to show time and again, realized that the prewar colonial system was dead. He attempted to set the stage for the progress of the African peoples by calling a conference of high French colonial officials at Brazzaville in the Moyen-Congo, to open in January 1944. This conference was to effect great changes throughout French Africa and to set the stage for an irrevocable change in the position of the Mossi chiefs.